mance and operation. As the ferro alloy industry is de-licensed and most of the units are primarily in the private sector, it would be for the individual units to undertake various steps in improving their performance. Government nevertheless is responsive to the needs of the ferro alloy industry and would provide all possible support.

Impact of Import of Scrap Steel

3196. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that recent liberalised policies will adversely affect such Public Sector Units like Sponge Iron India Limited, Khammam District, Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) what steps are being taken to protect Public Sector Units using advanced technology and involved in import substitution ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV) : (a) and (b) One of the objectives of the new industrial and trade policies is to make domestic industry including public sector units like Sponge Iron India Limited more competitive. It is a fact that due to the sharp fall in international prices of steel melting scrap (for which sponge iron is a partial substitute) the domestic sponge iron industry was facing difficulty. However, the international prices of scrap have now increased. The budget proposals for 1993-94 also contain various measures for improving the viability of industrial projects including sponge iron projects such as reduction of customs duty on capital goods, reduction of minimum interest rate on commercial advances, etc.

Expansion of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant

3197. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the cost of the expansion of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant has increased further; and

(b) if so, what remedial steps have been taken in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV) : (a) and (b) The Visakhapatnam Steel Plant with an annual capacity of 3 million tonnes of crude steel has been commissioned in July, 1992. The cost on completion of the project is estimated at Rs. 8529 crores. There is no proposal at present to expand the capacity of the steel plant.

All India Induction Furnaces Association

3198. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware of the crisis/problems in the induction furnaces sector of the secondary steel making units;

(b) if so, what remedial steps Government have taken in this regard; and

(c) whether the recommendations of the All-India Induction Furnaces Association have been considered by Government ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV) : (a) and (b) There has been a general sluggishness in demand for steel due to various reasons. With the excise duty relief for steel user industries like automobile and capital goods contained in the budget proposals for 1993-94, demand for steel is likely to pick up. Reduction of minimum interest rate on commercial advances will also reduce the cost of production.

(c) Yes, Sir.

Indo Japanese Cooperation in Shipping Sector

3199. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Japanese delegation recently visited India to explore the economic cooperation in shipping sector in general and ship breaking in particular;

(b) the details regarding total number of ships given for breaking each year for the last five years year-wise and State-wise;